

Keynote Address  
Presented to the  
First Regional Seminar  
On Home Care for Ventilator-Dependent Children & Adults  
St. Louis, Missouri  
December 13, 1983

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There appears in this archive the keynote at the first ever Surgeon General's Workshop under my aegis, which was on the subject of Ventilator-Dependent Children. This was a seminal meeting, because it was my belief that if we could manage the care of ventilator-dependent children at home, we could manage the care of any kind of handicapping situation at home.

It was the beginning of a number of things that I continued to track through my eight-year tenure as Surgeon General, and the goal can be stated briefly as an effort to provide for all "Special Needs" children comprehensive, coordinated, family-centered, community-based care.

The history of this movement while I was Surgeon General is an example of how well something can be done by government when the right people are involved, and when the subject catches on. A tremendous amount of credit goes to Vince Hutchins, the Director of the Bureau of Maternal and Child Health in the Public Health Service, and to his associate, Merle MacPherson. They worked tirelessly with me until the aforementioned goal was eventually incorporated into "Title V" of the Social Security Act as a guarantee to every "Special Needs" child in this country.

The original Surgeon General's Workshop was followed by regional workshops, state workshops, and community workshops all over the country. Just a catalog of the meetings that were held and brief summaries of their accomplishments filled a book. This keynote, by me, was addressed to the first of the regional workshops we had on this subject and was followed by many throughout the country, in all of which I was not able to participate.

One of the frequent questions I'm asked is, "What was my greatest accomplishment in Washington during my term as Surgeon General"? I answer it in many ways, and of course, it depends upon who asks the question and what their interest is. However, I think in the long run the number of lives that were affected by the work that was begun at the first Surgeon General's Workshop on ventilator-dependent children resulting in the change in the Social Security Law Title V, may well in the long-run be one of the most important things in which I became engaged.

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Definition of the problem  
Discrimination  
Financing of care  
Identifying areas of potential abuse  
Incorporating principles of care for children

with disabilities into training  
programs for health professionals  
and parents  
Medical information network (MINET)  
Model standards  
Regionalized systems of care  
SPANS Grant (Special Projects of Regional  
& National Significance  
Supporting research in care of children with  
disabilities  
The 4 mysteries – the human infant,  
parenthood, personal courage, and  
family love  
Ventilator-dependent children

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American Medical Association  
Governor Bond  
Crippled Children's Program at the  
University of Illinois  
John F. Kennedy Institute (Baltimore)  
The American Academy of Pediatrics  
The American Coalition of Citizens with  
Disabilities  
The American Association of Mental  
Deficiency  
The American Association of University-  
Affiliated Programs  
The Association for Retarded Citizens – US  
The Association for the Severely  
Handicapped  
The National Association of Children's  
Hospitals and Related Institutions  
The National Downs Syndrome Congress  
The Spina Bifida Association of America  
University of California  
University of Iowa  
University of Michigan  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of South Carolina  
Vanderbilt University